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The Riders of the Plains.

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THOS. T. A. BOYS.

Ho! wake the prairie echoes
With the ever welcome sound;
Ring out the "Boot and saddle"
Till the bugle's notes resound;
Our horses fret against the curb,
And chafe against the reins;
Ring out! ring out the marching call
For the Riders of the Plain.

O'er many a league of prairie wild,
Our trackless path must be;
And round it roam the fiercest tribes
Of Blackfoot and of Cree—
But danger from their savage hordes
Our dauntless heart disdains;
No thought of fear has ever stayed
The Riders of the Plains.

The prairie storm sweeps o'er us,
But onward still we go,
To climb the weary mountain range,
Descend the valleys low.
For whereso'er our leaders bid
The bugle sounds its strains,
No halt is there, but forward march
The Riders of the Plains.

We've crossed the dreaded cactus land,
Where, lost to human ken,
We startled many a creature wild
With the sight of armed men.
We've crossed the broad Saskatchewan,
Made fierce with autumn rains.
With all his might he could not check
The Riders of the Plains.

The fire king stalks the prairie.
And fearful 'tis to see,
The rushing wall of flame and smoke
Girdling round us rapidly.
'Tis then we shout defiance:
His power no triumph gains;
For safe the cleared circle guards
The Riders of the Plains.

We've seized the haughty feathered Chief,
Whose hands were red with blood;
E'en in the very Council Lodge—
We took him where he stood.
Two Fearless Hearts, mid threatening guns,
So Providence ordains,
Bore off the Chief to where lay camped
The Riders of the Plains.

And many a time a scanty few
Have bravely held the path;
Tho' many times outnumbered
By rebel Sioux in wrath.
But bold and fearless bearing
Alone the law maintains;
No blood, thank God, has yet been shed
By the Riders of the Plains.

For us no kindly hostelry,
Its welcome gates unfold.
No generous board nor downy couch
Await our trooper's bold.
But 'neath the starlit canopy,
At eve, when daylight wanes,
There sleep the hardy slumberers,
The Riders of the Plains.

But sore it is, when we have rode
From rise to set of sun,
If nightfall brings no cooling stream,
When the long day's march is done—
We'll face like men what e'er betide,
Of perils, hardships, pains,
Oh Heaven! deny not water to
The Riders of the Plains.

And Death, who comes where e'er we be,
To follower and to chief.
Has smitten us in the Far West,
And bowed our hearts with grief.
Five times he drew his fatal bow,
No prayer his hand restrains,
Five times his arrows sped among
The Riders of the Plains.

Hard by the Old Man's river,
Where freshest breezes blow
Five grassy mounds lie side by side,
Five Riders sleep below.
Neat palings close the sacred spot,
No stranger foot profanes
Their deep repose—and they sleep well,
Those Riders of the Plains.

They want no marble column,
They need no graven stone,
To blazon to a curious world
The deeds they may have done.
But the prairie flower blows lightly there,
And creeping wild rose trains
Its wealth of summer beauty o'er
Those Riders of the Plains.

Sleep on—sleep on young slumberers,
Who died in the Far West;
No prancing steed shall feel your hand,
No trumpet break your rest.
Sleep on, till the great Archangel
Hath burst death's mortal chains.
And ye hear the Great Reveille
Young Riders of the Plains.

We bear no lifted banner,
The soldiers' scare and pride,
No waving flag leads onward
Our horsemen when they ride.
Our only guide is Duty's Star,
And well its light sustains
Our brave and earnest hearted men
The Riders of the Plains.

We muster but Three Hundred,
In all this "Great Lone Land,"
Which stretches from Superior's shore
To where the Rockies stand.
But not one heart doth falter,
No coward voice complains,
"How few—how few in number are
The Riders of the Plains."

In England's mighty Empire
Each man must take his stand;
Some guard her honoured Flag at sea,
Some bear it well by land.
'Tis not our part to meet her foes:
Then what to us remains?
What duty does our Sovereign give
Her Riders of the Plains.

Our mission is to raise the flag
Of British Empire here;
Restrain the lawless savage, and
Protect the pioneer.
And 'tis a proud and daring trust,
To hold these vast domains
With but Three Hundred Mounted Men
The Riders of the Plains.

And tho' we win nor praise, nor fame
In the struggle here alone,
To carry out good British Rule,
And plant Old England's Throne;
Yet when our task is ended,
And law with order reigns,
The peaceful settlers long will bless
The Riders of the Plains.

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And is it not a glorious boast
That we can make this day,
That lawlessness in this new land
Has never yet held sway.
No reign of knife and pistol
Has left its bloody stains
On this Fair West, whose guardians were
The Riders of the Plains.

Ten years have passed since first we came,
Still hath no blood been shed;
Nor deadly strife arisen between
The White Man and the Red.
No homesteads laid in ashes;
No tale of torture's pains
Has marred the work our Sovereign gave
Her Riders of the Plains.

Our Leaders claim no medal,
Nor scroll of herald's pen,
For plundered towns and hamlets,
For slain or wounded men.
No! but they bear the purest badge
That ever man obtains,
The praise of duty done by all
The Riders of the Plains.

Among the hosts of gallant men
The Queen can call her own.
Was ever like true service done
To Her Imperial Throne?
Go read, where such vast countries
As those she here retains,
Were held by scarce Three Hundred Men
The Riders of the Plains.

Paint white our fair Escutcheon,
Young members of our band,
And lift your crests with honest pride
As ye ride through the land.
The Settler sleeps without a fear,
Our Sovereign Mistress reins.
And we have kept Her honoured trust
Young Riders of the Plains.